اِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ يَهْدِيْ لِلَّتِيْ هِيَ اَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ اَنَّ لَهُمْ اَجْرًا كَبِيْرًا

Quran English Translation and Tafseer

Sayyid Abul Ala Mawdudi

Surah 72 – Al-Jinn (The Jinn)

سُوْرَةُ الْجِنِّ مَكِّيَّةٌ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

(In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate)

قُلْ اُوْحِيَ اِلَيَّ اَنَّهُ اسْتَمَعَ نَفَرٌ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ فَقَالُوْٓا اِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْاٰنًا عَجَبًا ١

(72-1) Say, (O Prophet), it was revealed to me that a band of jinn attentively listened [1] to (the recitation of the Qur'an) and then (went back to their people) and said:

(1) This shows that the jinn at that time were not visible to the Prophet (peace be upon him), nor he knew that they were hearing the Quran being recited, but Allah informed him of the incident afterwards by revelation. Abdullah bin Abbas has also, in connection with this incident, stated: The Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah had not recited the Quran before the jinn, nor did he see them. (Muslim, Tirmidhi, Musnad Ahmad, Ibn Jarir).

يَّهْدِيْٓ اِلَى الرُّشْدِ فَاٰمَنَّا بِهٖ ۭ وَلَنْ نُّشْرِكَ بِرَبِّنَآ اَحَدًا ٢

(72-2) “We have indeed heard a wonderful Qur'an [2] which guides to the Right Way; so we have come to believe in it, and we will not associate aught with Our Lord in His Divinity”; [3]

(2) The words in the original are: Quran-un-ajaba, which means “something which is read again and again”, and the jinn probably used this word in this very meaning, for they were introduced to this divine revelation for the first time, and they did not perhaps know then that what they were hearing, was the Quran itself. Ajab is a superlative, which is used in Arabic for a wonderful thing. So, what the jinn said means: We have heard such a wonderful recital which is unique both in its language and in its subject-matter.

This also shows that the jinn not only hear what human beings say but also understand their language, although it is not necessary that all the jinn might know all the human languages. It is possible that those of them who live in a particular region of the earth might know the language of the people of that region. But in any case this statement of the Quran clearly shows that the jinn who listened to the Quran at that time were so conversant with the Arabic language that they not only appreciated the matchless eloquence of the divine word but also understood its sublime subject-matter.

(3) This throws light on several things:

(1) That the jinn do not deny Allah’s existence and His being Lord and Sustainer.

(2) That among them there are polytheists also, who like polytheistic human beings ascribe divinity to others than Allah: thus, the community of the jinn whose members heard the Quran was polytheistic.

(3) That the Prophethood and revelation of divine scriptures does not exist among the jinn, but whoever of them believe, they believe in the Prophets raised among human beings and in the Books brought by them. This same thing is confirmed by(Surah Al-Ahqaf, Ayats 29-30), where it has been stated that the jinn who had then heard the Quran, were from among the followers of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), and they after having heard the Quran, had invited their people to believe in the revelation that had been sent down by God confirming the previous scriptures. Surah Ar-Rahman also points to the same, for its whole subject-matter shows that the audience of the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) invitation are both the men and the jinn.

وَّ اَنَّہٗ تَعٰلٰی جَدُّ رَبِّنَا مَا اتَّخَذَ صٰحِبَۃً وَّ لَا وَلَدًا ۳

(72-3) and that “He – exalted be His Majesty – has not taken to Himself either a wife or a son”; (4)

(4) From this we know two things:

(1) That these jinn were either from among the Christian jinn, or they were followers of a different religion in which Allah was regarded as having children and families.

(2) That at that time the Prophet (peace be upon him) was reciting some such part of the Quran hearing which they realized the error of their creed and knew that it was sheer ignorance and impudence to ascribe wife and children to the High and Exalted Being of Allah.

وَّ اَنَّہٗ کَانَ یَقُوۡلُ سَفِیۡہُنَا عَلَی اللّٰہِ شَطَطًا ۙ﴿۴﴾

(72-4) and that “the foolish among us (5) have been wont to say outrageous things about Allah”;

(5) The word safihuna as used in the text can be spoken for an individual as well as for a group. If it is taken for a foolish individual, it would imply Iblis and if for a group, it would imply a group of foolish jinn who said such things.

وَّ اَنَّا ظَنَنَّاۤ اَنۡ لَّنۡ تَقُوۡلَ الۡاِنۡسُ وَ الۡجِنُّ عَلَی اللّٰہِ کَذِبًا ۙ﴿۵﴾

(72-5) and that “we had thought that men and jinn would never speak a lie about Allah”, (6)

(6) That is, we were misled by those falsehoods because we could never think that the men or the jinn could ever dare forge a lie about Allah, but having heard this Quran we now know that they were, in fact, liars.

وَّ اَنَّہٗ کَانَ رِجَالٌ مِّنَ الۡاِنۡسِ یَعُوۡذُوۡنَ بِرِجَالٍ مِّنَ الۡجِنِّ فَزَادُوۡہُمۡ رَہَقًا ۙ﴿۶﴾

(72-6) and that “some from among the humans used to seek protection of some among the jinn, and thus they increased the arrogance (7) of the jinn”;

(7) Ibn Abbas says that in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance when the Arabs had to spend a night in some uninhabited, desolate valley, they would shout out: We seek refuge of the jinn, who is owner of this valley. In other traditions of the pre-Islamic ignorance also the same thing has been reported frequently. For example, if in a place they ran short of water and fodder, the wandering Bedouins would send one of their men to some other place to see if water and fodder were available; and when they reached the new site under his direction, they would shout out before they halted to pitch the camp: We seek refuge of the sustainer of this valley so that we may live here in peace from every calamity. They believed that every un-inhabited place was under the control of one or another jinn and if someone stayed there without seeking his refuge, the jinn would either himself trouble the settlers, or would let others trouble them. These believing jinn are referring to this very thing. They meant that when man, the vicegerent of the earth, started fearing them without any reason, and started seeking their refuge instead of God's, it caused their people to become even more arrogant, haughty and wicked, and they became even more fearless and bold in adopting error and disbelief.

وَّ اَنَّ ہُمْ ظَنُّوْا كَمَا ظَنَنْتُمْ اَنْ لَّنْ يَّبْعَثَ اللّٰہُ اَحَدًا ۝۷

(72-7) and that "they thought, even as you thought, that Allah would never raise anyone (as a Messenger)"; (8)

(8) Another meaning of this sentence can be: Allah will not resurrect anyone after death. As the words are comprehensive, they can be taken to mean that, as among human beings, so among the jinn were those who denied both the Prophethood and the Hereafter. However, in view of the theme that follows, the meaning that we have given in the text above is preferable, for according to it these believing jinn tell the people of their community: Your view is proved wrong that Allah will not appoint anyone as a Messenger. In fact, the gates of heavens have been closed on us only because Allah has already appointed a Messenger.

وَّ اَنَّا لَمَسْنَا السَّمَآءَ فَوَجَدْنٰهَا مُلِئَتْ حَرَسًا شَدِيْدًا وَّ شُهُبًا ۙ﴿۸﴾

(72-8) and that “we tried to pry (the secrets of) the heaven, but we found it full of terrible guards and shooting meteors”;

وَّ اَنَّا كُنَّا نَقْعُدُ مِنْهَا مَقَاعِدَ لِلسَّمْعِ ؕ فَمَنْ يَّسْتَمِعِ الْاٰنَ يَجِدْ لَهٗ شِهَابًا رَّصَدًا ۙ﴿۹﴾

(72-9) and that “we would take up stations in the heaven to try to hear but anyone who now attempts to listen finds a shooting meteor in wait for him”; (9)

(9) This is the reason why these jinn were now out searching as to what particularly had happened or was going to happen on the earth, which had necessitated strict security measures against eavesdropping so that they were driven away from wherever they tried to eavesdrop in any way.

وَّ اَنَّا لَا نَدْرِیْۤ اَشَرٌّ اُرِیْدَ بِمَنْ فِی الْاَرْضِ اَمْ اَرَادَ بِهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ رَشَدًا ۙ﴿۱۰﴾

(72-10) and that “we do not know whether evil is intended for those on the earth, or whether their Lord intends to direct them to the Right Way”; (10)

(10) This shows that such extraordinary measures were adopted in the heavens only on two kinds of occasions. First, when Allah might decide to inflict the dwellers of the earth with a torment, and the divine will might be that before it was actually inflicted the jinn might not know and convey its news to warn their friendly human beings of the impending disaster. Second, that Allah might appoint a Messenger on the earth, and strict security measures might be adopted so that neither the messages being conveyed to him be interfered with by the satans nor should they be able to know beforehand what instructions were being given to the Messenger. Thus, the saying of the jinn means: When we noticed that strict security measures had been

adopted in the heavens for the safeguard of the news, and the meteorites were being showered profusely, we wanted to know which of the two things had happened: Whether Allah had caused a torment to descend suddenly on some people of the earth, or a Messenger had been raised somewhere on the earth. We were on the lookout for the same when we heard the wonderful revelation, which guides to the right path, and we came to know that Allah had not sent down a torment but had raised a Messenger to show the right way to the people. For further explanation, see(E.Ns 8 to 12 of Surah Al-Hijr); (E.N. 7 of Surah As- Saffat) and (E.N. 11 of Surah Al-Mulk).

وَّ اَنَّا مِنَّا الصّٰلِحُوْنَ وَ مِنَّا دُوْنَ ذٰلِكَ ؕ كُنَّا طَرَآئِقَ قِدَدًا ۙ﴿۱۱﴾

(72-11) and that “some of us are upright and some of us are otherwise for we follow widely divergent paths”; (11)

(11) That is, morally there are also good and bad jinn among us, and from the viewpoint of creed as well, all do not follow one and the same religion, but we are divided into different groups. With these words the believing jinn want to convince the other jinn of their community that they certainly stood in need of finding out the right way and could not dispense with this need.

وَّ اَنَّا ظَنَنَّاۤ اَنْ لَّنْ نُّعْجِزَ اللّٰهَ فِی الْاَرْضِ وَ لَنْ نُّعْجِزَهٗ هَرَبًا ۙ﴿۱۲﴾

(72-12) and that “we thought that we will neither be able to frustrate Allah on earth, nor frustrate Him by flight”; (12)

(12) That is, we were led by this very idea to the way of success. As we were not fearless of Allah and we believed that we would not be able to avoid His punishment if we disobeyed Him. So when we heard the divine revelation that had been sent to show the right way, we could not have the courage and boldness to persist in the beliefs that our foolish people had spread among us after we have known the truth.

وَّ اَنَّا لَمَّا سَمِعْنَا الْهُدٰۤی اٰمَنَّا بِهٖ ؕ فَمَنْ یُّؤْمِنْۢ بِرَبِّهٖ فَلَا یَخَافُ بَخْسًا وَّ لَا رَهَقًا ﴿۱۳﴾

(72-13) and that “when we heard the teaching of the Right Way we came to believe in it; he who believes in His Lord shall have no fear of suffering loss or being subjected to any injustice”; (13)

(13) Fear of deprivation: Fear of being given a lesser reward than what one actually deserves for one’s good deeds. Injustice: That one may be deprived of the reward for the good deeds done but duly punished for the errors committed or punished innocent; no believer has any fear of such an injustice from Allah.

وَّ اَنَّا مِنَّا الْمُسْلِمُوْنَ وَ مِنَّا الْقٰسِطُوْنَ ؕ فَمَنْ اَسْلَمَ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ تَحَرَّوْا رَشَدًا ﴿۱۴﴾

(72-14) and that “among us some are Muslims (Those who have submitted to Allah), and some of us are deviant. So those who became Muslims found the Right Course;

وَ اَمَّا الْقٰسِطُوْنَ فَكَانُوْا لِجَهَنَّمَ حَطَبًا ﴿۱۵﴾

(72-15) but those who deviated from the Truth, will be the fuel for Hell.” (14)

(14) Here, one may ask: When, according to the Quran, the jinn have been created from the fire, what harm can the fire of Hell do them? The answer is: Even according to the Quran, man has been created out of the earth; why does then man feel hurt when a clod of earth is thrown at him? The truth is that although the whole body of man has been made from the earthly substances, when a living man of flesh and blood is molded from them he becomes an entirely different thing from those substances; then other things made from the same substances become a means of causing harm to him. Likewise, although the jinn have also been created from the fire, when a living and sentient creation has been made from it, the same fire becomes a

means of causing harm and hurt for it. (For further explanation, see (E.N. 15 of Surah Ar-Rahman).

وَّاَلَّوِ اسْتَقٰمُوْا عَلَى الطَّرِيْقَةِ لَاَسْقَيْنٰهُمْ مَّآءً غَدَقًا ﴿١٦﴾

(72-16) If [15] people were to keep firmly to the Right Way, We would have vouchsafed them abundant rain [16]

(15) The conversation of the jinn having come to an end, with this begins the speech of Allah.

(16) This is the same thing as has been said in(Surah Nooh, Ayats 10-11). Seek forgiveness of Allah. He will send abundant rains for you from heaven. (For explanation, see(E.N. 12 of Surah Nuh). Abundance of water has been used for abundance of blessings metaphorically for human life, and habitations also depend on water. Without water there can be no human settlement, nor can man's basic needs be fulfilled, nor his industries work and prosper.

لِّنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيْهِ ؕ وَمَنْ يُّعْرِضْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ رَبِّهٖ يَسْلُكْهُ عَذَابًا صَعَدًا ﴿١٧﴾

(72-17) so that We might try them through this bounty. [17] Whoso turns away from the remembrance of his Lord, [18] He will cause him to suffer a grievous chastisement;

(17) We might try them by that blessing: We might see whether they remain grateful after having received the blessing or not, and whether they put Our blessing to right use or not.

(18) Turns away from the remembrance of his Lord, means that one may reject the advice and admonition sent down by Allah, or one may disdain giving ear to Allah's remembrance, or one may turn away from His worship.

وَّاَنَّ الْمَسٰجِدَ لِلّٰهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوْا مَعَ اللّٰهِ اَحَدًا ﴿١٨﴾

(72-18) and that “mosques belong to Allah, so do not invoke anyone with Him”; [19]

(19) The commentators generally have taken mosques to mean the places of worship. Accordingly, the verse means: None should be associated in the worship of Allah in the places of worship. Hasan Basri says: The entire earth is a place of worship, and the verse means to say: Polytheism ought not to be committed anywhere on God’s earth, He has reasoned out this meaning from the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) Hadith: For me the entire earth has been made a place of worship and a means of obtaining purity. Saeed bin Jubair has interpreted masajid to imply the parts of the body on which one prostrates oneself, i.e. the hands, the knees, toes and forehead. According to this explanation, the verse means: These limbs have been made by Allah; no one should prostrate oneself on these before anyone other than Allah.

وَّ اَنَّہٗ لَمَّا قَامَ عَبْدُ اللّٰہِ یَدْعُوْہُ کَادُوْا یَکُوْنُوْنَ عَلَیْہِ لِبَدًا ﴿۱۹﴾

(72-19) and when Allah's servant [20] stood up to call on Him, they well-nigh swarmed him.

(20) Servant of Allah: the Prophet (peace be upon him).

قُلْ اِنَّمَاۤ اَدْعُوْا رَبِّیْ وَلَاۤ اُشْرِکُ بِہٖۤ اَحَدًا ﴿۲۰﴾

(72-20) Say, (O Prophet): "I call on my Lord alone, and I do not associate aught with Him in His Divinity." [21]

(21) That is, to call upon Allah is no objectionable thing, which may so provoke the people. The evil thing, however, is that one should associate another with Allah in His divinity, and this I never do; this is done by those who mob and surround me when they hear God mentioned by me.

قُلْ اِنِّیْ لَاۤ اَمْلِکُ لَکُمْ ضَرًّا وَّ لَا رَشَدًا ﴿۲۱﴾

(72-21) Say: "Surely neither it is in my power to hurt you nor to bring you to the Right Way."

قُلْ اِنِّیْ لَنْ یُّجِیْرَنِیْ مِنَ اللّٰہِ اَحَدٌ ۙ وَّ لَنْ اَجِدَ مِنْ دُوْنِہٖ مُلْتَحَدًا ﴿۲۲﴾

(72-22) Say: "None can protect me from Allah, nor can I find a refuge apart from Him.

اِلَّا بَلٰغًا مِّنَ اللّٰہِ وَ رِسٰلٰتِہٖ ؕ وَ مَنْ یَّعْصِ اللّٰہَ وَ رَسُوْلَہٗ فَاِنَّ لَہٗ نَارَ جَہَنَّمَ خٰلِدِیْنَ فِیْہَاۤ اَبَدًا ﴿۲۳﴾

(72-23) (My task is no more than) to deliver Allah's proclamation and His messages. [22] And whoever disobeys Allah

and His Messenger, surely the Fire of Hell awaits him; therein he will abide in perpetuity.” (23)

(22) That is, I do not claim to have any share or role in the Godhead of Allah, nor that I possess any power in making or marring the people’s destinies. I am only a Messenger and the mission that has been entrusted to me is no more than that I should convey the messages of Allah to you. As for the powers of Godhead, they wholly belong to Allah. Not to speak of benefiting or harming others, I do not have the power to cause good or harm even to myself. If I disobey Allah, I cannot seek and have refuge anywhere from His punishment, and I have no helper and protector beside Allah. (For further explanation, see (E.N. 7 of Surah Ash-Shura).

(23) This does not mean that every sin and act of disobedience will cause one to live in Hell forever, but in view of the context in which this thing bas been said, the verse means: the one who does not accept the invitation to Tauhid given by Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) and does not refrain from polytheism will suffer in Hell forever.

حَتّٰٓى اِذَا رَاَوْا مَا يُوْعَدُوْنَ فَسَيَعْلَمُوْنَ مَنْ اَضْعَفُ نَّاصِرًا وَّ اَقَلُّ عَدَدًا ﴿٢٤﴾

(72-24) (They shall not change their ways) until they see that against which they had been warned, and then they will know whose helpers are weaker and whose supporters are fewer in number. (24)

(24) The background of this verse is that those of the Quraish who used to mob and surround the Prophet (peace be upon him) as soon as they heard his invitation calling to Allah were under the delusion that they had a strong band at their back and that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had only a handful of men with him, and therefore, they would easily overwhelm him. At this it is being said: Today these people find the Messenger (peace be upon him) helpless and friendless and they themselves supported and strengthened by great hosts and, therefore, feel encouraged and emboldened to suppress the invitation to the truth. But when the evil time with which they are being threatened comes, they will know who in fact is helpless and friendless.

قُلْ اِنْ اَدْرِىْٓ اَقَرِيْبٌ مَّا تُوْعَدُوْنَ اَمْ يَجْعَلُ لَهٗ رَبِّيْٓ اَمَدًا ﴿٢٥﴾

(72-25) Say: “I know not whether what you are promised is near or whether my Lord will prolong its term. (25)

(25) The style itself shows that this is an answer which has been given without citing the question. Probably, hearing what has been said above, the opponents might have asked mockingly and tauntingly: When will the time come with which you are threatening us. In response, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was commanded to say: The time will certainly come, but I have not been told the date of its coming. Allah alone knows whether it will come soon or whether a distant term has been set for it.

عٰلِمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلٰى غَيْبِهٖٓ اَحَدًا ﴿٢٦﴾

(72-26) He is the Knower of the Unseen, and He does not disclose His Unseen to anyone [26]

(26) That is, the knowledge of the unseen entirely rests with Allah: He does not give the whole of this knowledge to anyone.

اِلَّا مَنِ ارْتَضٰی مِنْ رَّسُوْلٍ فَاِنَّهٗ یَسْلُكُ مِنْۢ بَیْنِ یَدَیْهِ وَ مِنْ خَلْفِهٖ رَصَدًا ۙ﴿۲۷﴾

(72-27) other than to a Messenger whom He chooses [27] (for the bestowal of any part of the knowledge of the Unseen), whereafter He appoints guards who go before him and behind him, [28]

(27) That is, the Messenger (peace be upon him) by himself is no knower of the unseen, but when Allah chooses him to perform the mission of Prophethood, He grants him the knowledge of those of the unseen truths which He is pleased to grant.

(28) Guards: Angels, that is, when Allah sends down the knowledge of the unseen realities to the Messenger (peace be upon him) by revelation, He appoints angels on every side to safeguard it so that the knowledge reaches the Messenger in a safe condition, free from any kind of adulteration. This is the same thing which has been expressed in verses 8-9 above, saying: After the appointment of the Messenger (peace be upon him) the jinn found that all the doors to the heavens had been closed, and they noticed that strict security measures had been adopted because of which no room had been left for them to eavesdrop.

لِّیَعْلَمَ اَنْ قَدْ اَبْلَغُوْا رِسٰلٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَ اَحَاطَ بِمَا لَدَیْهِمْ وَ اَحْصٰی كُلَّ شَیْءٍ عَدَدًا ﴿۲۸﴾

(72-28) so that He may know that they have delivered the messages of their Lord. (29) He encompasses in His knowledge their surroundings and keeps a count of all things." (30)

(29) This can have three meanings:

(1) That the Messenger (peace be upon him) may know that the angels have delivered the messages of Allah to him precisely and accurately.

(2) That Allah may know that the angels have conveyed the messages of their Lord to His Messenger (peace be upon him) precisely and accurately.

(3) That Allah may know that the Messenger (peace be upon him) has conveyed the messages of his Lord to His servants precisely and accurately. The words of the verse are comprehensive and may possibly imply all the three meanings. Besides, the verse also points out two other things. First, that the Messenger (peace be upon him) is given that knowledge of the unseen which is necessary for him to perform his mission of Prophethood. Second, that the angels keep watch that the revelation reaches the Messenger (peace be upon him) safely and also that the Messenger (peace be upon him) conveys the messages of his Lord to His servants precisely and accurately.

(30) That is, Allah's power so encompasses the Messenger (peace be upon him) as well as the angels that if they swerve even a little from His will, they can be detected immediately. Moreover, a complete record has been kept of each letter of the messages sent down by Allah. The Messengers (peace be upon him) and the angels cannot dare add or subtract even a letter from them.